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COMMITTEE ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD

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SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 605th MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Friday, 21 January 2000, at 10 a.m.

Chairperson: Mrs. OUEDRAOGO

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GE.00-40496 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 10 a.m.

CONSIDERATION OF REPORTS OF STATES PARTIES (agenda item 6) (continued)

Second periodic report of Peru (CRC/C/65/Add.8); (CRC/C/Q/PER/2; written replies of the Government of Peru to questions raised in the list of issues (document without a symbol distributed in the meeting room in Spanish only))

1. At the invitation of the Chairperson, Mr. Voto-Bernales, Ms. Crosby, Mr. Chávez and Ms. Peña (Peru) took places at the Committee table.

2. Ms. CROSBY (Peru) said that, in 1996, the Government of Peru had established the Ministry for the Advancement of Women and Human Development (PROMUDEH), which had assumed the functions of the Governing Body of the National System of Total Care for Children and Adolescents. The Ministry's decentralized structure enabled it to involve local authorities and communities in its work on the promotion of human rights, especially the rights of the child.

3. During the 1990s, Peru had initiated a process of reform aimed at achieving economic stability and ushering in peace. Both those objectives had now been achieved; Peru was integrated into the international economic and financial community and terrorism had been eradicated. In other action taken to combat violence, Peru had concluded agreements with its neighbouring countries, and the year 2000 had been declared the "Year of Combating Family Violence".

4. A long process of improving standards of living was under way, in which the Government focused on efforts to combat extreme poverty. In 1991, the Social Compensation and Development Fund (FONCODES) had been set up to finance social investment projects, particularly in the areas of employment, health, food and basic education. Special attention was being paid to rural areas, where 79 per cent of children under 14 in a situation of extreme poverty lived. Since 1994, the Programme of Priorities for Basic Social Spending had resulted in an increase in overall social spending, particularly in the areas of education, health and justice, which had led to a significant reduction in extreme poverty. The Prioritized Strategy for the Relief of Severe Poverty, established in 1997, aimed to reduce extreme poverty to 11 per cent by the year 2000; 40 per cent of the national budget had been allocated to the social sector to combat the disparities between different sections of the population. FONCODES had drawn up a new map of poverty in order to provide a more up-to-date picture of those disparities, thus helping to target investment more effectively.

5. In the international sphere, Peru was a party to the six major international human rights instruments and had been one of the first countries to ratify the Convention on the Rights of the Child, in 1990. Various national plans had been drawn up with the aim of implementing Peru's international obligations, including the National Plan of Action for Children 1996-2000, the National Plan for Nutrition and Food 1998-2000, aimed at reducing chronic malnutrition, and the National Population Plan 1998-2002, aimed at improving quality of life and protecting sexual and reproductive rights. The Children's and Adolescents' Code had entered into force in 1993, followed by the Act on Family Violence.

6. The Children's and Adolescents' Code defined a child as a person under the age of 12 and an adolescent as a person aged from 12 to 18. It contained a provision designed to ensure that the best interests of the child were respected although problems persisted in implementing it. Laws had recently been enacted to outlaw discrimination against pregnant women and the disabled, and a special body had been set up within PROMUDEH to promote the social integration of disabled people.

7. The National Plan of Action for Children 1992-1995 had achieved most of its aims. The 1996-2000 National Plan of Action had three overall goals: survival, aimed at reducing infant and child mortality; development, aimed at reducing chronic malnutrition; and protection, aimed at achieving full implementation of the rights of children and teenagers. A coordinating committee made up of representatives of PROMUDEH, the Ministries of Health and Education and representatives of civil society, had been set up to provide follow-up to the Plan. Various non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and social organizations had also come together to form the National Commission for the Rights of Children and Adolescents. Since 1993, the Ombudsmen for Children and Adolescents had been working to promote and protect children's rights at the local level. Like all the bodies which dealt with children, the Ombudsmen took children's views into account. Children also had the opportunity to participate in school councils and to establish and join associations.

8. Despite the efforts made to promote dialogue and tolerance among youth, the problem of gang delinquency had been a new cause of concern in recent years. The Peruvian National Police had been developing social prevention programmes to combat neighbourhood and school violence, to prevent the exploitation of children working in the streets and to reintegrate street children into school and society.

9. Since 1993, the police had been receiving training courses on children's issues. Changes had been made in the juvenile justice system to ensure that juvenile offenders were tried in the presence of a representative of the Public Prosecutor's Department and a defence lawyer. The special measures introduced in 1992 to combat terrorism, which had been applicable to minors, had been withdrawn. Since 1997, the heads of juvenile justice centres had been required to monitor both the sentencing of juvenile offenders and the social and educational measures designed to reintegrate them into society. For juveniles still under investigation, a different system was in place, under the supervision of the National Family Welfare Institute and the preventive centres.

10. A working group had been set up within Congress, with the participation of PROMUDEH, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and NGOs, to review both the Children's and Adolescents' Code and Legislative Decrees Nos. 895 on aggravated terrorism and 899 on gang activities. Legislative Decree No. 895 had been amended to bring terrorism cases within the purview of the civil rather than the military courts.

11. The CHAIRPERSON invited the members of the Committee to ask questions on general measures of implementation, the definition of the child and general principles.

12. Mr. DOEK welcomed the detailed information provided in the State party's report. Although the report did not make explicit reference to the Committee's concluding observations

on the initial report, it was clear that efforts had been made to implement them. The many positive achievements included the establishment of PROMUDEH, the Poverty Relief Strategy and the National Plan of Action for Children. Other favourable developments were the establishment of special procurators for child-related and family issues and the measures taken to raise awareness of children's issues and to provide training for professionals working with and for children.

13. He asked how the various activities relating to the implementation of the Convention were to be coordinated, given that responsibility for overseeing the National System of Total Care for Children and Adolescents had been transferred to PROMUDEH.

14. He would like to know why a law such as Legislative Decree No. 895 on aggravated terrorism was still necessary in view of the claim that terrorism had been eradicated. It was a cause for concern that, pursuant to the Decree, it was possible to sentence a 16- or 17-year-old to 25 years in an adult prison. Legislative Decree No. 899 had also introduced serious penalties, including prison terms of up to six years, for children aged 12 to 18 who took part in gang activities. He would like to know why the Government had introduced Legislative Decree No. 899 and whether its approach to the problem of gangs had been based on research conducted in the United States of America. Were any other policies in place to address the problem of gangs besides the use or threat of such serious penalties?

15. Regarding the definition of the child, paragraph 149 of the report stated that there was no minimum age for testifying in court but that in practice testimony was given by children aged 8 or over. He would like to know whether that was true for all courts, including criminal courts, and whether children who were victims of serious crimes were expected to testify in court at such a young age. He also asked whether judges and lawyers participating in cases involving children received training in dealing with children.

16. Regarding the principle of the right to be heard, paragraph 229 of the report stated that a survey had been conducted to find out to what extent judges took the opinion of the child into account. He would like to know whether the Government had acted on the results of the survey by improving the training of judges who dealt with proceedings involving children.

17. Mrs. SARDENBERG welcomed the recent positive developments mentioned in the introductory statement, such as the reductions in poverty, the various national plans that had been put in place, the fact that Peru was a party to the six major international human rights instruments and the entry into force in 1993 of the Children's and Adolescents' Code. The Government's cooperation with civil society and NGOs was also to be welcomed, as it was vital for effective implementation of the Convention.

18. Information had been provided to the effect that the state of emergency was still in force, especially in the high Andes and the Amazon region. What was the impact of the situation on children? With reference to the governmental decentralization process, additional information would be welcome on the disparities between different areas. Were the resources allocated, including those allocated to children, also decentralized?

19. It had been stated that a group in the National Cogress was working on the Children's and Adolescents' Code. She asked whether a similar group was participating in the work on the implementation of the Convention. She would also appreciate further details about the effects of poverty on the situation in Peru and on the positive results achieved in combating poverty, especially among indigenous groups.

20. Turning to the subject of legislation, she asked why consideration was already being given to reforming the Children's and Adolescents' Code, which had only come into force in 1993. Implementation of any new legislation required a substantial period of time to be effective. Overly hasty reforms might have an adverse knock-on effect. She would also like to know whether the Survey on Living Standards, which was the main source of statistical information, covered all areas of the Convention. With regard to the definition of the child, the Children's and Adolescents' Code made a distinction between children (individuals up to the age of 12) and adolescents (individuals up to the age of 18). She asked whether there was flexibility in interpreting the Code, given the different rates at which children developed.

21. According to the representatives, Peru had experienced problems in implementing article 3 of the Convention. Further information would be welcome concerning the Peru-UNICEF Coordinating Committee; in particular, was it an independent body? Children were also supported by child protection officers. Although the large number of such officers was to be welcomed, she wondered whether provision was made for evaluating or monitoring their performance.

22. In conclusion, she asked what types of activities were included in the social prevention programmes developed by the Peruvian National Police to combat violence.

23. Mrs. MOKHUANE asked what percentage of social spending, the goal of which was to achieve a just society and alleviate poverty, was devoted to children's issues. According to the representatives, progress had been made in combating racial discrimination but the problem still arose. Did any national programmes exist to help the victims of discrimination, especially in improving their self-esteem?

24. She asked what progress had been achieved with the introduction of the Act on Family Violence. Had the Act merely suppressed violence, and what was being done to address the root causes of violence? In that regard, she doubted that the police were in the best position to conduct social programmes designed to combat the problem of violence. Finally, the initial report of Peru had stated that the minimum age of marriage was 16 for boys and 14 for girls. She asked whether that was still the case, and whether those ages might not be considered too low.

25. Mr. RABAH asked what role had been played by NGOs in the preparation of the second periodic report. He would also like to know the extent to which the Ombudsmen for Children and Adolescents were independent. Referring to paragraph 150 of the report, he asked what was meant by the expression "appropriate organ", to which cases were referred following an investigation. He would also welcome statistics on court cases involving child abuse in families and schools.

26. With reference to the definition of the child, the minimum age of employment in Peru was 12. That was very low, and further information would be appreciated, in particular about the age limit for work involving dangerous activities. The report stated that the regulations introduced to prevent full-time employment by young people had only recently begun to take effect, as it was difficult to change people's attitudes. Which body actually controlled the sphere of part-time and full-time employment?

27. Mrs. RILANTONO requested clarification of the phrase "social budget". Although it was clear that such a budget covered expenditure devoted to children, the other areas encompassed by it should be specified.

The meeting was suspended at 11 a.m. and resumed at 11.10 a.m.

28. Ms. CROSBY (Peru) said that the National System of Total Care for Children and Adolescents had included a secretariat responsible for the intersectoral monitoring of the National Plan of Action for Children. As the secretariat had not proved able to interact with representatives of civil society, its functions had been transferred to the Ministry for the Advancement of Women and Human Development (PROMUDEH). The intersectoral coordinating committee mentioned earlier was increasingly active and worked with municipal and local authorities. There was also a municipalities association, which was an essential part of the national system of providing for children's and adolescents' interests. The Government worked with local and municipal authorities in order to exchange experiences for the benefit of those most in need. The grass-roots organizations set up after the economic crisis in the 1980s continued to work for the interests of individual communities.

29. Legislative Decree No. 895 on Aggravated Terrorism was still in force and was currently being reviewed by the National Congress. Although the problem of terrorism had largely been overcome, repercussions remained. The state of emergency had been greatly reduced over the past decade and now affected only 3.7 per cent of the total population. In fact, the Government was willing to lift the state of emergency completely at the earliest possible opportunity. Gang violence by children was a recent phenomenon which had taken the authorities by surprise. They were trying to apply both repressive and preventive measures; for example, a proposal had been made to establish special community service for young people to encourage them to learn trades and to use their free time wisely. Gang violence was a repercussion of the terrorism with which the children in question had grown up, following which they had been affected by a syndrome of violence and family crisis. Efforts were being undertaken to eliminate domestic violence, which served only to alienate children from their family environment.

30. With regard to children giving evidence in court, she said that efforts were focusing on training law-enforcement officials to deal with cases involving the violation of children's and adolescents' rights. The training in question was provided in universities and by the National Council for the Judiciary. In that regard, an ever-increasing number of higher education institutions were incorporating the subject of children's and adolescents' rights into their curricula as a compulsory module. Act No. 27055 referred to the rights of victims of sexual violence. The Public Prosecutor acted ex officio to protect the children involved, and was

required to be present during all statements made to the police in cases of sexual violence committed against children and adolescents. Attempts were being made to change the repressive view of police officers and to make them appear more friendly towards the community.

31. Regarding decentralization, under the Constitution a transitional regional administrative council existed in each of the 24 national departments. In accordance with a decision taken in July 1999, from 2000 onwards funds would be allocated to municipalities for the administration of health and education programmes, to ensure that resources reached local populations directly.

32. The National Congress included a committee on women and human development, which acted as a counterpart to the ministry of the same name. The committee functioned by means of public hearings involving ministries and NGOs, which were part of an ongoing process of consultation of the different institutions to ensure that the legislation to be enacted was appropriate.

33. The amendments made to the Children's and Adolescents' Code were part of an updating process. Much progress had been achieved in recent years and it was hoped that the subject of child labour would soon be incorporated into the Code, with the minimum age for employment set at 14 in accordance with the relevant International Labour Organization (ILO) Conventions and Recommendations. An improved definition of ill-treatment had also been proposed, extending the concept to abandonment and psychological trauma. Work on the Code would include civil society in the form of municipal committees, thereby ensuring more effective decentralization of monitoring duties.

34. Despite problems in applying the principle of the best interests of the child, the Government was aware that efforts to do so must continue, and that information on that principle should be disseminated to the general public. The National Commission for the Rights of the Child would aim to reach children in more remote areas to make them aware of their rights, for example their right to express their opinions openly.

35. Progress had been achieved with regard to poverty relief, and efforts were made to ensure that budget allocations benefited the neediest groups. Special emphasis was placed on indigenous populations living in border areas. The agreements which had been signed with bordering countries had enhanced cooperation and allowed for greater access to border regions. An intersectoral secretariat for indigenous affairs had been formed, comprising all the institutions working in favour of indigenous populations.

36. In recent years, the National Institute of Statistics and Data Processing had been collecting data on children's issues, in cooperation with UNICEF. The next population census, to be carried out in 2000, would update data and introduce new categories such as child labour.

37. The division between the official definitions of children and adolescents, ages 0-12 and 12-18 respectively, had in fact helped to promote different personal development processes. It did not contradict the definition of the child set forth in the Convention, which described a child as a human being below the age of 18 years. Amendments to the official definition designed to include child labour had been submitted to the Congress for approval.

38. NGOs enjoyed total independence. They enjoyed the same useful exchange of information with the State which characterized the State's relationship with society at large.

39. Child protection agencies ("defensorías del niño y del adolescente"), as distinguished from the Ombudsman ("defensor del pueblo"), were formed by professionals drawn from different disciplines, including persons at the community level, who were trained by the Ministry of Justice and PROMUDEH. They promoted and disseminated information on children's rights and resolved domestic and other local conflicts through conciliation procedures. In countries like Peru, a great deal of trust was placed in people working at the grass-roots level. However, abuses committed against children were not addressed through conciliation, but were treated by the police, judges and psychologists.

40. Child protection officers existed in all sectors which dealt with children's issues. For example, some child protection officers reported to local Governments, others to schools, NGOs or public institutions. PROMUDEH provided them with guidelines, supervision and general support. In case of requests for additional officers, PROMUDEH provided training and basic materials. An up-to-date directory of officers was maintained.

41. An increasing number of youth leaders had been elected to school councils through democratic participation. PROMUDEH was working in concert with the Ministry of Education to perfect the system and to ensure genuine youth participation in order that the councils would be not merely an exercise in the workings of municipalities but a forum for young people to cooperate with school authorities.

42. Other sectors in addition to the ministries had benefited from social spending. With regard to the social budget, for 2000 the Ministry of Health had been allocated 14.37 per cent, the Ministry of Education 6.68 per cent and the Ministry of the Presidency 1.6 per cent. All the sectors worked closely together. Health and education allocations were transferred directly to the municipalities.

43. Efforts to eradicate discrimination had targeted not only child victims of racial or ethnic discrimination but also child victims of terrorist violence. In that connection, self-esteem and resilience programmes had been launched in the mountain and forest regions, with excellent results.

44. Recent legislation had set the minimum age for marriage at 16 years, which might seem low but which accurately reflected the situation in certain parts of the country. The law enabled children of 14 years and above to recognize their offspring so as to ensure the right of newborns to a name and an identity. Civil society and NGOs had been involved in all stages of the preparation of the report to the Committee. Two months earlier a Memorandum of Understanding had been signed with several NGOs and cooperation agencies regarding an information system, bibliographies and activities on behalf of children, at the regional level.

45. With respect to the minimum working age, ILO Convention No. 138 concerning Minimum Age for Admission to Employment had received a positive assessment from the executive power, and was shortly to be approved by Congress. An intersectoral committee had been established to define monitoring mechanisms for full-time and part-time work, in particular

domestic work, which was difficult to monitor and which involved a large number of young people. In a joint project with the National Institute of Statistics and Data Processing, the committee was collecting information in order to provide the municipalities with legal support mechanisms, which were responsible for monitoring domestic work.

46. The CHAIRPERSON invited the Committee members to ask additional questions, followed by questions on the next two sections of the list of issues (CRC/C/Q/PER/2).

47. Mrs. RILANTONO said that, although the Constitution and Children's and Adolescents' Code guaranteed freedom from discrimination, there had been reports of discrimination based on gender, race and ethnic origin. Noting the high percentages of women, especially rural women, who lived in extreme poverty and who were either illiterate or poorly educated, and the high incidence of adolescent pregnancies among girls under 15 years of age, she asked what the Peruvian authorities were doing to combat gender discrimination.

48. Mr. DOEK asked whether the representatives might clarify once more the difference between the ombudsman and the child protection officer. There had been no reply to the Committee's question on police brutality. With regard to family environment, the written replies referred to an extremely high number of orphans, 40,000, in the emergency zones; he asked what was being done to assist them.

49. Foster care was taken quite seriously by the Government, and there was a noted preference for national adoptions. He asked how foster care and adoption were promoted, whether there were financial or other incentives offered to recruit prospective foster and adoptive parents and how the selection was made.

50. He inquired whether preventive measures had been taken to combat the worrying problem of domestic violence, and how much was invested in such measures. Had any public or private awareness-raising campaigns been launched with respect to corporal punishment?

51. Mrs. SARDENBERG said she doubted the wisdom of a coordinating body being dependent on the Children's and Adolescents' Code as any changes to its functioning as a result of necessary periodic assessment would require amendments to the Code. Turning to the definition of the child, she said that uniformity of the law was of paramount importance. Further information on mechanisms for children's participation would be welcome. She would also like to know whether reports that Peru intended to withdraw from the Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence against Women were correct.

52. In view of the fact that Peru would be hosting the next Beijing + 5 regional meeting, she asked whether improvements in the situation of the girl child had been observed. She also wished to know whether the Convention was taught in schools. Lastly, she asked whether the Government had launched a campaign in regard to birth registration, whether the procedures for birth registration might be simplified and whether a cost was involved.

53. Mrs. MOKHUANE said she was still unclear about the problem of child labour in Peru and how domestic work, in particular, was regulated. How was the right to privacy protected in emergency zones? She asked whether progress had been made in changing women's perceptions about their role in registering births. In the case of single mothers, were children given the mother's or the father's name, and what were the related difficulties?

54. Mr. RABAH said he would welcome additional information on corporal punishment, whether it posed a problem in the family, schools and society at large, and whether new legislation had been drafted in that regard.

The meeting was suspended at 12.05 p.m. and resumed at 12.15 p.m.

55. Ms. CROSBY (Peru) reiterated that domestic work was difficult to monitor, which was why an intersectoral committee had been established and domestic workers introduced as a new category in the upcoming census. Domestic work was popular among teenage girls who arrived in the city for the first time. However, the Government tried to prevent situations where young domestic workers lived in the home of their employer. A system had been proposed whereby young people would register with the municipalities, which would then be able to monitor the situation.

56. The Free School Insurance (SEG) scheme also contained a mechanism for reporting the cause of a child's illness or injury at work to the relevant agency. Dangerous forms of child labour were prohibited and maximum hours of work established. National programmes existed designed to integrate working children into the school system. With regard to the difference between the Office of the Ombudsman and the social protection services (defensorías), the former was a national institution for hearing complaints from private individuals, following which the authorities were invited to meet their human rights obligations. The social protection services reported to municipalities throughout the country and worked on a conciliation basis. They informed the general public of the rights of children and young people. Their efforts were coordinated by PROMUDEH, with the help of the municipalities, NGOs and civil society.

57. Laws amending the Children's and Adolescents' Code had been issued, with the cooperation of the Ministry of Justice, and had been compiled in a single text. While it was not possible to amend the legislation to take into account every new aspect that emerged, the authorities updated the Code and corrected features which ceased to be appropriate. Both the Code and the Convention were taught in syllabuses in connection with democratic participation. The privacy of children and adolescents at risk was closely monitored. A programme was being implemented to bring down to 11 per cent in 2000 the 14-15 per cent of the population living in extreme poverty, many of whom were single female heads of households. The 40 per cent living in critical poverty was equally divided among men and women.

58. In recent years, there had been a marked drop in the illiteracy rate, which stood at 7 per cent, and efforts were being made to reduce it to 4 per cent. Boys and girls received virtually the same level of assistance for primary education, while there was a disparity between them for secondary education. Measures were in place to reduce the gender disparity, and

PROMUDEH was actively promoting the National Plan for Equal Opportunities for Women for the 2000-2005 quinquennium. The Ombudsman's Office included a women's ombudsman, who worked closely with the agencies responsible for women's issues and with society as a whole.

59. Seven of 10 illiterates in Peru were women. The national literacy plan implemented by PROMUDEH to increase the literacy rate among girls had recently received the King Seyjong Prize from the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) for its achievements in the areas of women's literacy, business management, provision of information on sexual and reproductive rights and efforts to curb domestic violence. The social protection services had resolved 300,000 cases of rights violations in the period 1997-1999 - 17 per cent of which had involved children - without recourse to the courts. While there was no special legal advisory service, the people were aware that help was available at the protection service offices and were sufficiently involved to ensure that violations were reported. Representations to the Public Prosecutor's Department and the courts had revealed that reports of widespread police brutality were unfounded.

60. Nearly half of the 600,000 persons displaced owing to terrorist activities were children or young people, but a National Programme of Support for Resettlement and Development of Emergency Zones helped those wishing to return and assisted them with construction of homes, water supply, sanitation, and agricultural work for a period of six months. Over 20,000 had already returned, and the areas in question were regularly visited by officials. Not all of the 40,000 children orphaned as a result of terrorism were totally abandoned and in need of adoption or alternative care. Those who were appeared before the courts and, where appropriate, were put up for adoption.

61. Domestic family violence called for more than medical care, prevention being the effective solution. Peru had declared 2000 as the "Year of Combating Family Violence" and was focusing on prevention by informing people of their rights. She acknowledged the need for clear-cut language defining children and adults. Replying to a question concerning childcare institutions, she said the National Family Welfare Institute was implementing programmes to ensure comprehensive care of children and teenagers in institutions. Peru had no intention of denouncing the American Convention on Human Rights.

62. An intersectoral network comprising 20 public and private institutions established priorities for the education of girls and teenagers, including young school drop-outs, who were more numerous in rural than in urban areas. The network impressed upon families the importance of protecting the rights of girls. Ministries and NGOs had long been involved in affirming the right to a name, and some 40,000 children were newly registered. The law required registration of births by the hospital authorities prior to the departure of the mother and baby. An awareness campaign would be run from January to March 2000; its purpose was to educate not only women, but also Civil Registry Office staff in the rules and conditions of registration. Mothers were entitled to register children in the absence of their spouses, and new legislation enabled single mothers to disclose the name of the child's father for entry on the birth certificate.

63. Corporal and psychological punishment persisted among all strata of Peruvian society, and campaigns were in progress to develop a culture of respect for rights to ensure that children were well treated.

64. In connection with Peru's ratification of the Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence against Women (Convention of Belém do Pará), eight offices had come together in March 1999 under the aegis of PROMUDEH to discuss ways of jointly tackling the issue of violence against women. As a result, a formerly protracted process now lasted only a few days. There were 10 emergency units throughout the country, the national assistance programme had been assigned a more substantial budget, and positive results had already been achieved by officials of different institutions working together.

65. The CHAIRPERSON invited Committee members to put follow-up questions to the delegation of Peru.

66. Mr. DOEK, citing paragraph 375 of the report to the effect that foster placement needed promoting in Peru, asked what action had been taken for that purpose since the publication of the report in 1998. He had been disturbed to learn that an average of 1,000 children went missing every year. As a State party to the Inter-American Convention on the Forced Disappearance of Persons, what action was Peru taking to locate them?

67. Mrs. MOKHUANE said that a great deal of information had been provided on measures to combat violence, on the relationship between violence and poverty and on poverty alleviation. However, she would like to know what steps the authorities were taking to promote the parenting skills of young mothers, of whom there were many in Peru; what linkage had been established between violence and young motherhood; and what action was being taken in that regard.

68. Given Peru's high birth rate, it was astonishing that there should be a waiting list for adoption. She wondered what the community's attitude to adoption was and what the Government was doing to speed up the adoption process, particularly as there seemed to be no proper communication between the courts and the care institutions. Also, were there plans to increase human resources in the justice system, especially with a view to accelerating the adoption process?

69. Mrs. RILANTONO drew attention to an allegation of discrimination against particular ethnic groups, especially indigenous communities. The report stated in paragraph 378 that social workers reported to the court at six-month intervals in respect of children in institutional care. She wished to know whether a systematic monitoring mechanism existed for children in other types of alternative care.

70. Mrs. SARDENBERG acknowledged that the Peruvian Government was well aware of the problem of violence, which was a fundamental issue for the Committee, inasmuch as there were reports that 50 per cent of children were beaten by their parents on a daily basis in a

traditional culture of widespread ill-treatment. Only recently had a Code been established to attempt to change perceptions. She suggested that the authorities should conduct an in-depth study of the situation so as to have a clear idea of its scope and attempt to reduce it. She also inquired about reports of forced recruitment of children and their ill-treatment during military service.

71. Ms. CROSBY (Peru), referring to placement and foster care, said that many different protection measures were in place for children deprived of their families. Adoption was a long-term measure, while placement was temporary. The courts determined which type of placement was most appropriate for a child, on the basis of criteria such as proximity to the child's place of origin. Act No. 26981 of October 1998 provided greater security with regard to adoption and guarantees similar to those provided in the Code. The adoption decision was now taken by the appropriate administrative body, but usually with the knowledge of the courts. The court conducted a preliminary custody hearing, after which the child was put on a waiting list. There was a three-year monitoring period for national adoptions and a four-year period for inter-country adoptions. So successful had the system been that Peru frequently received inquiries from other countries, including European countries, wishing to use Peru's legislation and system as a model for inter-country adoption agreements.

72. Although violence against children existed throughout Peruvian society, the authorities assigned priority to eradicating it. She thanked Mrs. Sardenberg for her suggestion in that regard.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.